A

BRIEF STATISTICAL ANSWER

TO THE SPEECH OF THE

RT. HON. ROBERT LOWE, M.P.,

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON

COMPULSORY VACCINATION;

TO WHICH IS APPENDED CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

THE REGISTRAR GENERAL,

J. F. MARSON, ESQ.,

(SURGEON OF THE LONDON SMALL-POX HOSPITAL,)

AND THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

To so piecemeal a production a fragment of preface being most suitable, the following letter may stand as such:—

"Small-pox and Vaccination Hospital,
London, October, 1, 1861.

"DEAR SIR,—I have been from home for a short time and found your letter of September 23rd on my return.

"There is not anything in my letters to you that I have any objection to being made public. When writing for the press one is a little more particular than in simply writing letters. Something will perhaps seem to require explanation when the letters are brought together to make a connected whole. For instance, I do not know that I explained to you why the certificate of successful vaccination is given on the 8th day. On that day it can be seen whether the operation has been successful or not, *and that is the best day for taking lymph for the use of others*. There has always been difficulty in getting the mothers to take the trouble of attending again for the operator to procure lymph at the proper time. Had they been required to attend on a later day than the 8th for a certificate, a large number would have made one journey, on the latest day of attendance, do, at a period when their children would have been of no use to others in affording supplies of lymph for vaccinating. To you, I dare say, it appears wrong to grant the certificate on the 8th day, when, as I have explained, the child under vaccination is not thoroughly secure against small-pox. Still, no harm is done, and in dealing with the business of life we must take a practical as well as theoretical view of the difficulties with which we have to contend.

"I remain, yours faithfully,

"J. F. MARSON."

"Geo. S. Gibbs, Esq."

A BRIEF STATISTICAL ANSWER TO MR. LOWE.

Sir,—The words of Persius—

"Listen; but lay that haughty frown aside,
That sneer produced by prejudice and pride,
While from thy breast those noxious weeds I tear
Which fools have sown, and thou hast nurtur'd there,"

may properly be addressed to the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, M.P. for Calne, Vice-president of the Educational Board, an editor of the *Times*, and one of her Majesty's Privy Council, who, on the 10th July, supported the Vaccination Acts Amendment Bill before the House of Commons, in a speech to the following effect:—

"He regretted that there should be any discussion on the subject. Compulsory vaccination was the law of the land, by the Act of 1853, and the bill before the house was merely a re-enactment of a clause expunged, in 1859, from the Public Health Act, 1858, with his consent. His having consented to the repeal of this clause was a source of bitter reflection to him, because he believed that, if retained, it would have saved thousands of lives, but had he not done so, the bill itself would have been lost. He was now determined to repair his error, and convince the opponents of vaccination that their sordid and brutal prejudices should not interrupt the operation of the law. Previous to the year 1840, the average number of deaths by smallpox was 12,000 a-year,—12,000 that might have been saved! When the compulsory law came into force, the number of vaccinations at first enormously increased, and the number of deaths diminished in proportion. In 1854, the first year after the passing of the act, the deaths diminished from 5,200 to 2,808; in the next year the deaths were still lower, but they gradually increased again as the act fell into desuetude and *pari passu* the number of vaccinations diminished. In 1856, there were 2,227 deaths; in 1857, 3,936; in 1858, 6,460; and in 1859, probably owing to the exertions made to induce Boards of Guardians to enforce the law under the clause of 1858, the deaths sank to 3,848.

The average number of deaths (from all causes) from 1848 to 1852, among children under one year, with whom the disease was most fatal, was 318,000; in 1854, immediately after the act was passed, they rose to 408,000, in 1855, they were 354,000, in 1856, 350,000, in 1857, 338,000, in 1858, 341,000, in 1859, 335,000 and in 1860, 354,000, so that they had sunk about 50,000 below what they were in 1854."

To those honest and simple-minded people who, bred in an awful reverence for things as they are, imagine that every law has been three times carefully scrutinized by the representatives of the people, three times by our hereditary legislators and, lastly, by that Royal lady who, in Norman French, "wills it," it will appear mysterious and nearly incredible that an Act so invasive of private and domestic rights should be passed on a mere hypothesis which can never be substantiated, and that a man in Mr Lowe's high position could use the language reported as his without having properly examined the subject on which he spoke. That such, however, in the case, I do not despair of proving to any attentive reader.

Let us first deal with Mr Lowe's declamation.

He regrets and deprecates discussion of the subject—why? Because discussion brings truth to light and he fears it would not appear on his side.

He reflects bitterly on his conduct respecting the Public Health Act which, in 1859, he saved at the cost of thousands of lives. What is this Public Health Act? The second clause declares that Public Vaccinators ought to have, and that the Poor Law Guardians ought to see that they have *some* knowledge respecting their practice: and the fourth clause, the pith of the measure, is as follows:—"The powers of appointing and removing a Medical Officer, vested in the General Board of Health, shall be vested in the Privy Council and the person who at the time of the cesser of the General Board of Health may be their Medical Officer, shall become the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, and the Privy Council may also from time to time employ such other persons as they deem necessary for the purposes of this Act; and there shall be paid to the Medical Officer such salary not exceeding fifteen hundred pounds per annum, and to such other persons such remuneration and allowances as the Commissioners of her Majesty's Treasury may direct."

Was such jobbery worthy of salvation at so great a cost?

He denounces the opponents of his pet system as sordidly and brutally prejudiced.

Sordid! Because they decline to submit their children to an operation, to be performed at no personal cost to themselves, although by so declining they risk, though the crazy officiousness of Poor-law officials, being subjected to considerable annoyance, trouble, and expense. Brutal! Because they prefer seeing the skin of their children whole and sound to having them wounded by lancets dipped in unknown poison, such wounding having, not unfrequently, a fatal termination. Prejudiced! Because they seek a straightforward answer to this question:—How is it, if vaccination be a protection against small-pox, that a number of persons die every year of that disease after having been vaccinated?

Let us now examine his facts and arguments.

In considering the figures, for which the Registrar-General is responsible, it will be necessary to bear in mind

that vaccination was first made compulsory in 1853, that in 1858 the law was supplemented, or, as Mr Lowe might say, complemented, by the eighth clause of the Public Health Act, and that this clause was repealed in 1859. These alterations of the law, made in the autumn, cannot be supposed to have any effect on statistics of mortality for the year in which they were made; so vaccination is to be regarded as compulsory in 1854 and the following years, but especially and completely so in 1859.

The number of deaths by small-pox in England and Wales, London included, were in

1850	4,665	1855	2,525
1851	6,997	1856	2,277
1852	7,320	1857	3,936
1853	3,151	1858	6,460
1854	2,808	1859	3,848

Mr Lowe states that the law operated to reduce the mortality in 1854, from 5,200 to 2,808. A glance at the figures shows the decline of that year to have been 343, instead of 2,392, and that the decline of the previous year, without the aid of the law, was 4,169. Passing this, let us turn our attention to the statistics of smallpox mortality in London, and to guard against any charge of unfairness in selecting London as a place where vaccination is especially neglected, allow me to quote from an article in the *Times*, commenting on the Registrar-General's returns for 1859: "The Cornwall Registrars report that there is a great neglect of vaccination in that county. In one district, that of St. Clement's, Truro, 'a whole period of a year-and-a-half elapsed without the performance of a single vaccination by the public vaccinator.' At St. Austell, 'although the medical practitioners have been vaccinating a large number of persons since the smallpox has been in the vicinity, there are a great many still unvaccinated.' The result of this neglect is, of course, a large mortality in these districts from smallpox. At Gomersall, in the West Riding, the Registrar reports a great neglect of vaccination. There are probably hundreds of places where the Registrars could make the same report. It is characteristic of the slow growth of ideas in the minds of our peasantry that they are not yet familiar with the principle of vaccination, though it is now more than 60 years since the medical discovery was made; and though the scruples of Hindoos and Chinese have given way to it, and American savages sent their thanks to its author. The backwardness in this case is quite in keeping indeed with their general habits and way of going on. It is a part of that indisposition to stir themselves, to do any thing they have not done every day and hour of their lives, which any one who sees their way of going on is sure to observe. A new idea is painful to them. They had rather go on for years enduring annoyances and inconveniences than undergo a morning's process to get the advantage of a remedy. It is true they have nothing to do in the case of vaccination but to go to a surgeon; but the call to take a step, as it were in the

dark, is distasteful to them, and is responded to with suspicion and a vague sense of all kinds of gloomy and ominous possibilities."

There died of small-pox in London in—

1850	496	1856	531
1851	1,062	1857	156
1852	1,159	1858	242
1853	211	1859	1,158
1854	694	1860	877
1855	1,039		

Adopting Mr Lowe's method of reasoning, we have to remark on these figures:—in 1854, when the act came into operation there was an increase in the mortality of 483, and in the following year a further increase of 345; that as the law became disregarded the mortality declined; but the law being made stringent in 1858, the mortality in 1859 exceeded that of the previous year by 916, while the relaxation which took place in 1859, declared itself in a diminution of mortality in the succeeding year to the extent of 281.

Thus it appears that if the statistics of small-pox mortality for England and Wales favour the opinion that compulsory legislation has had a beneficial effect upon it, those for London show the direct contrary; and the demonstration is much more perfect and conclusive in the latter than in the former instance.

The statistics, for the whole country, do not, however, really sustain Mr Lowe's opinion, for, if the mortality during 1854 and the five following years had been the same as that of 1853 it would have amounted to 18,906, while it has actually been 21,854, showing an excess of 2,948. The statistics for London, taken in the same way, show an excess of small-pox mortality in seven years, of 3,220.*

But these figures reveal yet another marvel for the vaccinators. In the year 1858 the mortality in the country was 6,218, in 1859, 2,690; so that amongst the "peasantry" for the latter year, respecting which the *Times* raves at them for neglect of vaccination, there was an absolute decline of small-pox deaths amounting to 3,528.

Mr Lowe entirely shirks a question of vital importance in considering this subject, namely, What proportion of this small-pox mortality occurred after vaccination? although it would appear from his expression "12,000 that might have been saved" that he assumed them to be all unvaccinated.

With a view to obtaining authentic information on this point, I addressed a note to the Registrar General, from whom, ever courteous and ever prompt, I speedily received the following reply: "I have to inform you that my abstracts of the causes of death do not enable me to distinguish the vaccinated from the un-

* Increase of population might account for some small portion of this excess; on the other hand, the many costly sanitary arrangements made during those years ought to have caused a decrease. Let them balance each other.

vaccinated dying of small-pox. I have, however, much pleasure in supplying you with the total numbers dying of that disease in each of the ten years 1850-59." At the same time, I wrote to the resident surgeon of the London Small-pox Hospital, asking him to send me the annual reports of that institution for the last ten years. His reply, and the correspondence following upon it, I venture, despite its length, to append as it illustrates many points of great interest, with regard to which Mr Marson, being one of the originators of the Act of 1853, is entitled to a special hearing.

These two sources of knowledge being closed, we must make use of what we have.

On the 9th of May, 1833, Dr George Gregory stated to a select committee of the House of Commons, that during seven years ending with 1832 there had been in the London Smallpox Hospital 534 deaths, of which 40 occurred after vaccination. He also stated that in the same institution, in 1825, there died 120 persons, of whom 12 had been previously vaccinated; that the Swedish epidemic of 1824 carried off 560, 34 having been vaccinated; and that the Ceylon epidemic in 1830 was fatal to 94 persons, of whom 16 were vaccinated.

Mr Marson has published statistics of the Smallpox Hospital for the sixteen years ending with 1851, showing 1274 deaths, 268 occurring after vaccination.

The Registrar General informed Dr Epps, with regard to the smallpox deaths (1062) occurring in London in 1851, that 664 were returned as without vaccination, 91 after vaccination, and that he had no information respecting the remaining 307 cases. Suppose we divide the unknown cases, and say 244 vaccinated and 818 unvaccinated; but in connexion with this reference should be made to the 7th and 8th letters in appendix II.

In November, 1859, Dr Letheby wrote to the Editor of the *Times* thus:—"Since July last, I have made especial inquiries into the particulars of 93 cases of smallpox which occurred in the city, and of which 34 were fatal; and the results were that in 13 of the fatal cases and 14 of the recoveries vaccination had not been performed."

Bringing these into one view we have:—

		Deaths.	Vaccinated.	
In 1824	Sweden	560	34 =	6.1 p.100
1825	Smallpox Hospital	120	12	10.0
1826-1830	do.	534	40*	7.5
1830	Ceylon	94	16	17.0
1836-1851	Smallpox Hospital	1,274*	268*	21.0
1851	London	1,062	244	23.0
1859	City of London	34	21	61.8

Mr Lowe not only shirks the important question now imperfectly answered, but with the infatuation characteristic of the advocates of bad causes, introduces another

* Dr Gregory and Mr Marson state, with reference to these figures, that 10 of the 40, 145 of 1,274, and 63 of the 268 were cases "affected by superadded disease."

connected certainly, but more remotely, with the subject in hand, and parades the statistics of infant mortality, thus :—

Average previous to 1853	318,000	In 1857	338,000
In 1854	408,000	1858	341,000
1855	354,000	1859	335,000
1856	350,000	1860	354,000

Were I a logician of his school, I might aver that this excessive infant mortality, no less than 254,000 beyond the average in seven years, was due to the operation of the law, and sustain that opinion by a refereuce to the number of vaccinations which, according to Lord Granville's speech delivered in the House of Lords, March 7, 1859, were, in proportion to the births, in 1853, 33 per cent.; in 1854, 65; 1855, 56; 1856, 54; in 1857, 52; but I leave you and your readers to draw your own conclusions from the foregoing and following facts, figures, and arguments, merely recording my owu renewed and confirmed conviction that vaccination is in no sense a prophylactic of smallpox, that the right road to health and longevity does not lie through a narrow pass bristling with the points of poisoned lancets, and that the attempt to force every infant through such a danger is little, if at all, short of iniquitous.

I remain, yours respectfully, GEORGE S. GIBBS.

Haughton-le-Skerne, 9 Mo. 9, 1861.

P. S.—After writing the above, I thought it might be interesting and satisfactory to exhibit, in a tabular form, the proportions of Vaccinations, and Deaths under one year, to the Births during a series of years, and thus ascertain at a glance, the exact, or nearly exact, relation existing between Vaccination and infant mortality. For the necessary statistics I applied to the Registrar General, from whose office, with customary promptitude, I received a statement of the number of Births and Deaths; but, instead of the Vaccinations, this memorandum: "This information cannot be given by the Registrar General."

THOMAS MANN, Chief Clerk.

Whereupon I wrote :—

Haughton-le-Skerne, Darlington,

Sir,— 9th Mo. 17th, 1861.

I have to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, supplying information respecting Births and Deaths. Referring to your statement that the number of vaccinations registered cannot be given by the Registrar General, can you kindly instruct me to whom I should apply for this information, which is essential to the perfection of the work I have in hand?

Repeating thanks, I remain, yours respectfully,

Thomas Mann, Esq. GEORGE S. GIBBS.

And received this reply ;—

General Registrar's Office, Sept. 18th, 1861.

"Sir,—In reply to your note received this morning, I regret my inability to refer you to any authentic source from whence it would be possible for you to obtain any-

thing approaching to a correct statement of the number of vaccinations registered annually in England.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

George S. Gibbs, Esq. THOMAS MANN, Chief Clerk."

Whence it appears that this precious and cherished law, the repeal of a single clause of which, according to Mr Lowe, caused the sacrifice of thousands of lives, does not secure even a proper record of the operations performed in pursuance of its provisions.

9th Mo. 27th, 1861. G. S. G.

APPENDIX I.

Haughton-le-Skerne, Darlington, 8 Mo. 19, 1861.

SIR,—There is a paragraph now going the round of the papers under the head of "Causes of Death in England," to a portion of which I respectfully beg leave to direct your particular attention:—"To the Registrar-General's Report (1859) is appended, as usual, an instructive paper by Dr. W. Farr. Smallpox destroyed 3,848 persons, chiefly children *who had not been vaccinated.*" On the 23rd ult. you kindly sent me an account of the number of persons dying of smallpox, during several years, at the same time stating that "your abstracts of the causes of death did not enable you to distinguish the vaccinated from the unvaccinated dying of smallpox."

The two statements seem scarcely reconcileable without explanation.

I remain, yours respectfully,

GEORGE S. GIBBS.

To the Registrar-General, London.

General Register Office, 20th August, 1861.

SIR,—Although my returns do not enable me to state the exact number of the 3,848 persons who died of smallpox in 1859 unvaccinated, the Returns sufficiently indicate that a *majority* had not been vaccinated.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

GEORGE GRAHAM, REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

George S. Gibbs, Esq.

Haughton-le-Skerne, Darlington, 8 Mo. 21, 1861.

SIR,—I have to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date. I was induced to trouble you on the subject because the generality of newspaper readers would not understand that a bare majority was meant by the expression "chiefly children who had not been vaccinated," especially when followed by such words as these:—"An instance, as Dr. Farr remarks, of the rigour with which the infringement of sanitary laws is visited: for the children perish and the parents lose their offspring by the neglect of a precaution of the simplest kind." I beg leave respectfully to submit to you that Dr. Farr's "instructive" paper would have been much more instructive had he indicated the cause of death to the *minority*, since it would appear that the "precaution of the simplest kind" had been adopted by them.

I regret that I cannot regard the explanation given as entirely satisfactory. If the certificate of death in each case states the fact of vaccination or non-vaccination, there is no perceptible difficulty in arriving at the exact number in each

class—if not, that a majority were unvaccinated must be a mere assumption.

I remain, yours respectfully,

GEORGE S. GIBBS.

To the Registrar-General, London.

APPENDIX II.

(1.)

Smallpox and Vaccination Hospital, London,
July 22, 1861.

Sir,—There is not any annual report published regularly of this Hospital. One is printed for circulation amongst the Governors occasionally. Each year in February an account appears through the newspaper reporters of the patients admitted, and some financial statement of the Hospital for the past year. Sometimes in one paper, sometimes in another. It has been in the *Times* the last two years.

You do not state what object you have in wishing for the report, whether medical or general, or perhaps I could have helped you. I suppose not medical, as I do not see your name in the Medical Directory, this however is not conclusive, you may belong to the medical profession but not be in practice. If you belong to the medical profession and are interested in any way about Smallpox and Vaccination, you will find an account, for sixteen years, of all patients admitted into the Hospital in the Med. Chir. Trans. vol. 36, arranged and classified by me, showing the effects of vaccination, &c.

I am, &c., J. F. MARSON,
Resident Surgeon.

(2.)

Haughton-le-Skerne, Darlington, 7 mo, 23, 1861.

Sir,—I am much obliged by your letter, and offer of service. I am not a member of the medical profession—but compulsory legislation has taken vaccination in some measure out of the hands of the faculty and placed it in those of the public, obliging every thoughtful parent very seriously to study the subject. It was with this view that I applied to you for information respecting your hospital for the last ten years.

I am acquainted with your tables for the sixteen years ending 1851. Are those mentioned in your letter the same? If not, and for a later period, I shall be glad to procure them and spare you any further trouble; but if they are the same, you would very much oblige me by supplying the figures for the years 1851-1860, shewing the number of patients admitted, divided into vaccinated, unvaccinated, and not stated, and the number of deaths in each class.

The use I intend to make of this information, if given, is to submit it, with other indisputable facts to some medical friends in an independent position for their consideration and my course as a parent and citizen with reference to the law will be influenced, if not regulated, by their expression of opinion.

I remain &c., GEORGE S. GIBBS.

(3.)

London, July 29, 1861.

Sir,—The paper I mentioned in my last letter is the one you are already acquainted with, giving an account of all patients admitted at this hospital for 16 years to 1851.

It is very tedious work collecting and arranging statistical information on a large scale. The information for the last ten years is collected and partially arranged, as I have before furnished it, and when given to the world after so much trouble it will be more agreeable to me to bring it out in my own way, than through a second person.

The public I think can hardly require more convincing proof of the efficacy of *good* vaccination than that afforded in my paper to which you have alluded. I remain &c.,

J. F. MARSON.

(4.)

8 mo. 1, 1861.

SIR,—Allow me to thank you for your letter of the 29th ult., altho' not accompanied by the information sought.

I cannot but express my personal regret that it is withheld, for the tables referred to cannot be considered as conclusive evidence that vaccination as now generally practiced, and prescribed by law, is an efficient protection against smallpox.

In 1859 (Nov.) Dr. Letheby, in a letter to the *Times*, gave the following figures as the result of some observations he had made, during some three months preceding the date of his letter, in the City of London viz :—Smallpox cases 93, vaccinated 66, un-vaccinated 27: Deaths 34, vaccinated 21, unvaccinated 13. The discrepancy between these figures and yours is so great as to lead to the supposition that either smallpox, cowpox and the general constitution of the people have very materially altered their relations to each other in the course of a few years, or that the legalized vaccination is *not* 'good;' and, if not, then surely something to be strictly and carefully avoided.

The more recent statistics of your hospital would, I should think, tend to show which of these opinions would be most nearly correct. I trust, therefore, that you will not delay carrying out your intention of publishing them at an early date, and remain, &c., GEORGE S. GIBBS.

(5.)

London, August 3rd, 1861.

SIR.—Dr. Lethehy most likely obtained his information about the cases of smallpox mentioned by you from the registers of deaths; not from personal observations and enquiries. Many of the registrars are not medical men and know nothing of the points to be observed in registering such deaths. They would enter the death as having occurred after vaccination although the vaccination had not been performed above four or five days. Nothing is more common than for persons to put off the vaccination of their children until smallpox is in their house or next door and then to go and have them vaccinated. Many of the deaths (I have no doubt from any knowledge of the subject) mentioned in Dr. Letheby's report occurred under these circumstances.

Unless vaccination has been performed 10 or 11 days before illness from smallpox *it has no effect in controlling the attack of smallpox*—to have effect, it must have got on to the *stage of areola before smallpox illness commences*. Smallpox *illness commences* between the 11th and 12th day after inhaling the disease. The areola from vaccination is not fully formed until the 9th or 10th day after vaccination. Now here is a degree of niccty that will never be observed by the non-medical

registrar, if even by him—so that when smallpox shews itself within a fortnight after vaccination the person should be considered as unvaccinated. Vaccination has had no chance of exerting its influence.

All patients are closely questioned here, on their admission, about vaccination; and their arms examined for the mark. After, name, age and other particulars, "Have you been vaccinated?—Yes. Where were you vaccinated?—At Haughton-le-Skerne. Who vaccinated you?—Mr Jones. Did the vaccination take effect?—No." Now unless this last question were asked the patient might easily pass as vacciuated and so it is often in registering the deaths.

A person to get at the truth must be skilled in the enquiry.

I am, &c., J. F. MARSON.

(6.)

8th mo. 5, 1861.

SIR,—Dr. Letheby's words are:—"Since July last I have made especial inquiries into the particulars of 93 cases of small-pox which occurred in the city, aud of which 34 were fatal; and the results were that in 13 of the fatal cases, and 14 of the recoveries vaccination had not been performed."

I have been informed by the Registrar General that his "abstracts do not enable him to distinguish between vacciuated and unvaccinated persons who have died of small-pox," and since receiving his letter I have ascertained that the ordinary form of certificate of death is not such as to admit of the information being inserted. These facts seem incompatible with your theory respecting the source of Dr. Letheby's information.

The case supposed in the latter part of your letter assumes in my mind the form of a powerful argument against the law (which is what concerns me and other non-medical parents), for if vaccination, non-effective as regards small-pox, be common, legal prescription must render it more common, and the public health must be proportionately prejudiced.

There is another point mentioned in your letter, respecting which I feel somewhat puzzled, namely, the time after the performance of the operation of vaccination at which it may be declared successful. Mr Hovell insists on the 6th or 7th day, the law prescribes the 8th, you say the 10th or 11th, aud Dr. Epps stands out for the 15th. Can you, from these discordant notes, produce anything approaching to harmony?

I remain, &c.,

GEORGE S. GIBBS.

(7.)

London, August 7, 1861.

SIR,—I fear I did not make my statement clear about the time necessary for vaccination to exert its protective influence. I will try again. Small-pox appears generally, if not invariably, in the uuvaccinated on the 14th day after being taken On the 12th day illness commences, which continues for 48 hours, and then the eruption begins to appear. Now vaccination, to be protective, must have got on to the stage of areola before illness from small-pox commences, *i.e.*, the areola should be *well formed*. The areola will be well formed when the vaccination runs its regular course, on the 10th or 11th day, but occasionally the course of vaccination is retarded, from illness or peculiarity of constitution.

But it is necessary in these matters to be very particular in the use of words. Vaccination may be fairly said to be "successful," so far as it goes, when the operation has taken effect, but it also wants *time* in start of small-pox to be *protective*. I hope I have now made the subject clear to you.

The Registrars of deaths take the information from anybody, and the public generally cannot fairly be expected to be particular in these matters. I always have sent the particulars about vaccination in persons who die at this hospital to the Registrar, and you will find instructions on the subject given in one of the early Reports of the Registrar General. It was suggested at that time that, unless vaccination had been performed *a month* before the occurrence of small-pox, that persons dying of small-pox should not be considered to have been vaccinated. I think you will find instructions to this effect.

The statistics you gave me the other day from Dr. Letheby's paper, taking the whole of the cases, you will see correspond with my unprotected cases, viz., 35 per cent. of deaths. This led me to think sufficient care had not been taken in furnishing the particulars, because the mortality in this Hospital, for some years past, taking all cases vaccinated and unvaccinated has only been 12 and 13 per cent—last year 14—three or four previous years 12 and 13. I am, &c., J. F. MARSON.

(8.)

8th mo. 14, 1861.

Sir,—I take the earliest opportunity of thanking you for your letter of the 7th inst., and for your kind attempt to elucidate a very difficult subject.

If I rightly understand your expressions, the case stands thus:—Vaccination may, according to law, be pronounced "*successful*" *so far as it goes* on the 8th day after the performance of the operation: but cannot be deemed *protective* until after the lapse of a fortnight without the appearance of smallpox.

From this it appears that the much vaunted law, resistance to which draws on the opponents denunciations of lunacy and wicked desire to "sacrifice their children to a sordid and brutal prejudice," does not provide what alone it is supposed to ensure, namely, *protection* against smallpox, but only a vaccination "*successful*" so far as it goes, and which in thousands of instances affects injuriously the whole of after life.

It was with a feeling akin to despair of ever arriving at a knowledge of the absolute truth on this subject that I read your statement respecting the instructions issued by the Registrar-General. If a person is not vaccinated and *protected* a month after the operation when is he or when can he be?

Dr. Hauernik, of Prague, says that, there, certain figures are placed in certain columns "just to square the register;" but I am exceedingly unwilling to believe that English statistics are *made* to suit the opinions of the public servants who have charge of them, and the figures set to dance to any tune that may be pleasing to theorists in power.

I am, &c., GEORGE S. GIBBS.

(9.)

London, August 16th, 1861.

Sir,—One word more about the protection afforded by vaccination. A person *is* protected at the end of a month after

vaccination—he *is* protected at the end of a fortnight if he has no illness then from smallpox. But vaccination must have time to act, and has laws of its own like other things in nature—a seed requires time to germinate and reach maturity—the impregnation of animals requires time for the production of the young, varying even in different animals—it can, therefore, not be surprising that vaccination requires time for its protection. It was the same with inoculation for smallpox. If smallpox had been taken in the natural way, the inoculation was of no use unless it had had time to act in its peculiar way.

As to the time that ought to have elapsed after vaccination, in a person dying of smallpox, before the death is considered as fairly after vaccination, there need not be any great difficulty about it. We have settled that when vaccination has gone on properly and there is no illness from smallpox, vaccination is protective at the end of a fortnight, perhaps a day or two sooner; but if smallpox eruption begins to shew itself at the 10th or 11th day it is not protective. Now, then, smallpox destroys life generally on the 11th, 12th, or 13th days—some live a few days longer, but that is the usual time of death after it shews itself—thus 13 days added to the fortnight necessary for protection brings the time to nearly a month.

I have taken more trouble to make you understand the subject than with any individual before. When I write I write for the profession. I am interested principally in the scientific part of the inquiry, and in arriving at the truth. I deny that vaccination ever "affects injuriously the whole of after life" as you state.

I am, &c.,

J. F. MARSON.

(10.)

8th Mo., 19th, 1861.

Sir,—Allow me to assure you that I fully recognize and appreciate the courtesy with which you have taken so much trouble with one whom I doubt not you consider the reverse of an apt pupil.

Our points of view are not the same. You regard vaccination *per se* in relation to small-pox as a matter of professional interest. I regard *the law* as a matter of political and social interest. I find an extensive and costly system established on the hypothesis that it operates to the benefit of the public health—I inquire, is the hypothesis verified by facts? I find my domestic life interfered with in a novel and disagreeable manner. I inquire, is it for good or evil? Such enquirers are denounced to the House of Commons by Mr Cowper as lunatics and by Mr Lowe as actuated by a sordid and brutal prejudice. *Cela n'importe.* I inquire all the same.

Your explanation gives a show of reason for the Registrar-General's instructions respecting the month; but I still think them calculated to produce a false result: for the local registrar would naturally reckon the month from the time of the completion of the vaccination; or, at least, from the date of the "successful" certificate.

Believe me that it was not hastily or unadvisedly that I used in my last letter, referring to operations legally prescribed and purporting to be vaccination, the expression "affect injuriously the whole of after life." I stated a sorrowful and but too well-known fact, against which it is useless to oppose a simple denial.

Two cases have come (I have no time to seek them) under my own observation. The first was that of an infant operated on against the will of the parents, they yielding only under threat of prosecution, as they had suspicious respecting the source of the lymph to be used. These suspicions were fearfully justified, and when I saw the child it was frightfully disfigured for life and labouring under all the symptoms of secondary syphilis. In answer to questions, the mother informed me that the medical man said it was "nothing;" but at the same time she gave me a *portion of the remedies he had prescribed.* The second is that of a little girl now four years old. She was, up to the age of six months, in perfect health when she was vaccinated. The operation was almost immediately followed by eruptions on various parts of the body as well as by evident great internal suffering which continued for more than two years, the persons in charge of her not having a night's rest during the whole of that time. *Now* the eruptions have ceased, but there is, even in the midst of play, an expression in her countenance most painful to witness.

A gentleman resident at Carlisle, has written to me detailing the case of his daughter who was in perfect health, at a year old, when she was vaccinated. The operation was speedily followed by the appearance of a disease to which no doctor could give a name and from which she suffered at intervals to the age of seven when it caused her death.

A highly respectable and intelligent man, who has several children, speaking to me a short time since about the law said:—"I would sooner go to prison than have any more of mine touched. My second boy was vaccinated and he is the only weakly one of the lot."

You may say that these cases are not to the point, that they can be explained away and that they could not possibly have any connexion with vaccination. I cannot but think otherwise. For if vaccination, or operations performed as such, did never injuriously affect health,—

How is it that the Scientific Congress of France about to assemble at Bordeaux have to award a prize of 10,000 francs to the successful demonstrator of the advantage and *harmlessness* of vaccination ?*

How is it that Dr. Bachhoffner in writing to me, after describing the system of vaccination in Marylebone, should declare "in my opinion, this is a fruitful source of failure, *if not something worse?*"

How is it that the Registrar General's reports contain from time to time, among the causes of death, such entries as "vaccination, 5 days—vaccination, erisypelas, 10 days"?

Depend upon it, the cognizance of such facts by the common people, among whom they most prevail, is the reason why the law is disregarded, detested, and abhorred; and not, as the *Times* ridiculously asserts, an "absolute ignorance of the beneficent discovery made 60 years ago, and of which Hindoos, Chinese, and American savages have testified their appreciation."

I remain, &c., GEORGE S. GIBBS.

* The Congress met on the 16th September, and continued its sittings for ten days. After a very lively discussion, the committee chosen to make the award decided that none of the supporters of vaccination having fulfilled the required conditions, Dr Nittinger, the donor of the prize, should be released from the bond into which he had entered respecting it.

(11.)

London, Aug 30 1861.

Sir,—I hardly know whether you would expect m to send an answer to your last letter. I suppose I could not convince you of the harmlessness of vaccination, but I would say, in reply to your statement, that I have vaccinated above 50,000 persons and have neither seen nor heard of any of the evils amongst them such as you describe.

Erisypelas is the most likely evil to follow and perhaps does, in rare instances, cause death, owing, probably, to the vaccine lymph being taken for use at too late a stage. It should, however, be remembered that erisypelas follows, occasionally, wounds of all kinds,

You would hardly, I suppose, if the law were in your hands, leave all persons to take smallpox in the natural way and die, as they do, at 35 per cent. If not, and you inoculate them for smallpox, you would run the same chance of syphilis as at present from vaccination,—mind I do not say there is any chance of it, because, not having seen it in 50,000 vaccinations, I do not believe in its being so transferred.

You should see, in this hospital, when smallpox is very prevalent in London, the terrible disfigurements, loss of sight, and loss of life it produces, and then set this against your list of almost imaginary evils.

As to the political part of the business, it is very little people suffer from being made to do well, they suffer, in many instances, from being allowed to do ill. If, however, danger or injury rested alone with those or their friends who refused to be vaccinated it would not be of so much matter. But others suffer from it. If you had an obstinate neighbour who chose in mere wantonness and love of mischief, to burn his house down and in so doing burnt yours, you would think, I dare say, there ought to be some law to prevent him, or at least, to punish him for so doing.

So if you disliked both vaccination and inoculation, and chose to let your child remain unprotected, and your neighbour, of a different way of thinking, chose to *inoculate* his child, and by so doing gave yours small-pox, and killed it, you would then think, I dare say, very naturally, there ought to be some law on the subject.—but your neighbour might not think so. Unfortunately, in making laws, however good they may be, it is impossible to please everybody.

I am, &c.,

J. F. MARSON.

(12.)

9th mo. 2, 1861.

Sir,—Few laws please everybody; but the misfortune of the vaccination law is that it pleases nobody. It certainly does not suit the views of its opponents, and its promoters are dissatisfied, or we should not have had the bill of this year supported by Mr Lowe's "cram," whence has arisen this correspondence.

If I had a wicked neighbour who, in injuring himself, should injure me, I have my remedy at common law. If my neighbour were a madman, no special law could make him act in a sane manner. We do not make laws for every possible event contingent on the freaks of a madman, we take the simple, and I think, the wiser plan of placing him under restraint and care.

The evils mentioned in my letter are far from being "almost imaginary" to the sufferers, and it is no consolation to them to be told that such cases are rare—one in a hundred, or one in a thousand, theirs being the one. Nor can I allow, as a just set-off against these evils the danger and *desagremens* of of small-pox; for you know, although you appear to have written in a moment of forgetfulness, that did I walk through your hospital, I should see that disease, disfiguring, blinding, and killing those who had taken what Dr. Farr terms "a precautiou or the simplest kind," as well as those who had refrained from tampering with the health of bodies fearfully and wonderfully made. I believe, also, that small-pox would not be the dangerous disease it is if the time and talent now expended in endeavouring to *charm* it were devoted to devising a better method or means of *cure*.

Finally. Laws affecting the public health should be, beyond all reasonable doubt, for its benefit. To justify the vaccination law, Jenner's proposition should be capable of proof.—"That cowpox admits of being inoculated on the human frame with the most perfect ease and safety, and is attended with the singularly beneficial effect of rendering through life the persons so inoculated perfectly secure from the infection of small-pox." The people once believed this, admired and rewarded its author, and needed not any legislative scarecrow to induce them to adopt or submit to the described practice.

With thanks for your courteous and interesting letters.

I remain, your respectfully,

J. F. Marson, Esq. GEORGE S. GIBBS.

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